

# THE Asylum

VOL. 38 NO. 1



SPRING 2020

Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society • COINBOOKS.ORG



5

## Vatican City COINS

1929-1978



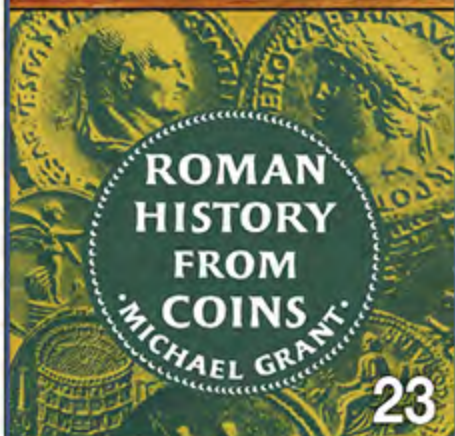
## MONETE della Città del Vaticano

PETER JENCIUS

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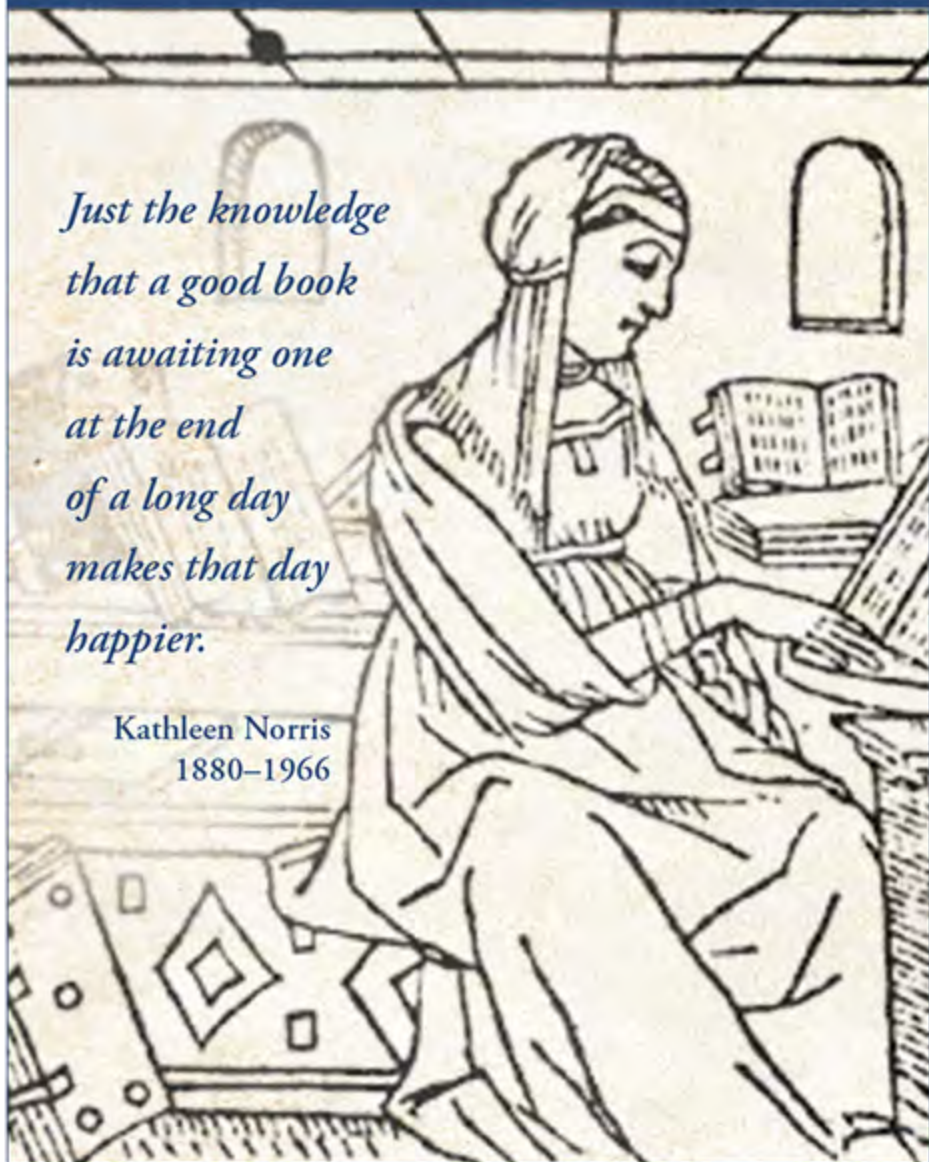
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of a long day  
makes that day  
happier.*

Kathleen Norris  
1880–1966



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## **Deadlines for Submissions and Advertising:**

Spring Issue (No. 1) February 1  
Summer Issue (No. 2) May 1

Autumn Issue (No. 3) August 17 (After ANA)  
Winter Issue (No. 4) November 1

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Tom Harrison  
NBS President

## Message from the President

Numismatists, by nature, are a generous fraternity with NBS members, past and present, among the foremost in the hobby. For example, in 1988 at the NBS Board Meeting in Cincinnati, the treasurer reported the coffers were nearly exhausted. So at the General Meeting, a plastic bag, “the hat,” was passed resulting in a \$1607 boost to the treasury. In the past, the NBS has made financial contributions to the ANA and ANS libraries.

Many members have generously donated items for the benefit auction and open-handedly purchased lots to support the NBS.

Historically, in addition to financial support, the NBS has been fortunate to have members step forward to serve on the Board, as Treasurer, *The Asylum* Editor and *The E-Sylum* Editor. Friends of the NBS have provided engaging articles for *The Asylum*, spoken at our educational forums, hosted the club table, served as auctioneer, and the list goes on and on.

In the most recent example of generosity, several anonymous members donated the extensive George F. Kolbe archives sold in the Kolbe & Fanning sale of George’s library, to the ANS library on behalf of the NBS. This treasure trove of correspondence, photographs and ephemeral items that focus on prominent literature personalities and events, is now available for current and future numismatists to explore and enjoy. Additionally, NBS members donated two other significant lots from the sale. NBS Vice President Len Augsburgers donated several limited edition volumes by Remy Bourne detailing United States fixed price and premium lists. Also, NBS past President and current board member Dan Hamelberg donated George Kolbe’s complete set of his own special hardcover auction catalogs. In a fitting tribute, NBS board members Dave Steine and Dan Hamelberg presented George with his unique large paper copy of *The Reference Library of a Numismatic Bookseller* at the New York International Numismatic Convention.

These thoughtful gestures continue to demonstrate the willingness of NBS members to share their passion for numismatic literature with the greater collecting community. The NBS is truly grateful for this enduring tradition of generosity of time, talent and resources that sustains and defines our amazing organization.

I hope everyone enjoyed listening to the first NBS podcast, “NBS Bibliotalk: The Coin Book Lover Podcast,” produced by Lianna Spurrier, that featured an entertaining and informative interview with NBS Historian Joel Orosz. We are delighted to report that Dennis Tucker, award-winning numismatic researcher and author and publisher at Whitman Publishing, will be featured in our upcoming podcast. Please watch for an announcement of the podcast’s release in *The E-Sylum*.

May your numismatic library provide investigation, discovery, and most of all, enjoyment.





Maria Fanning,  
*The Asylum* Editor

# From the Editor

## *Our Next Theme Issue*

Thank you, NBS members, for another great year of *The Asylum*. Your contributions made our 40th Anniversary issue one of the best yet!

The theme of the next issue will be “**Evolution of a Numismatic Library**.” Dan Hamelberg so generously shared his library with NBS members last August (“Invasion of Champaign,” *The Asylum* vol. 37, no. 3) and we want to learn about yours.

We want to read about how your library has grown and changed over the years. Have you built an addition to your home, rented a storage unit or filled your spouse’s china cabinet to hold your expanding collection? Has the focus of your collecting changed over time or have your studies piqued your interest in completely different areas? We would love to read about how your library is arranged and decorated with unusual numismatic art and ephemeral items, too. As always, please share lots of photos of your inner sanctum and treasures.

Please send submissions to [asylum@coinbooks.org](mailto:asylum@coinbooks.org) by May 1 to be included. Thank you in advance for your contributions!

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To the editor,

While David Pickup’s misadventures with Wikipedia as he sought to learn more about the prominent and important collector known as “Lord Grantley” had a tongue-in-cheek air about it (“A Life Story and How NOT to Research Numismatists,” *The Asylum* vol. 37 no. 4), he did underscore a problem with specialist information in this popular online information source. Even beyond Wikipedia, it is often difficult to get detail from a general Google search.

Fortunately for numismatics, an outstanding volume of biographical information on numismatists was published in 2009 by Harry Manville, *Biographical Dictionary of British and Irish Numismatists*. Living numismatists were not included, he noted in his introduction, because to include them would not only “have been impractical as new works are constantly appearing, but it also might have engendered invidious resentments among those omitted.” But the rich history of numismatists up until the end of the 20th century is thoroughly covered in this large and definitive volume.

For Lord Grantley the lengthy entry summarizes his life personally, his collection and his contributions to numismatics. He died in August of 1943 and the sale of his collection began in November, a difficult era for publishing because of the restrictions of World War II and life in London. The multi-volume series of catalogs of his collection by Glendinning lacks the extensive cataloging and photography (only 14 plates across eleven sales) that marked sales during less fraught times but the eleven sale catalogs still remain a record of one of the definitive collections that was formed during the late 19th and first half of the 20th century.

Allan Davisson

# ASSOCIATIONS

## *Autographs • Annotations • Inscriptions*

### Samuel Breck on... *Massachusetts Coinage?*

By Joel J. Orosz

Many an American numismatic author's cognomen is automatically associated with the subject of his *magnum opus*, such as "Crosby on Colonials," "Browning on Quarters," and "Bolender on Dollars." The most venerable example of such an association is, without question, "Breck on Continental Paper Money." Samuel Breck (1771–1862) published his *Historical Sketch of Continental Paper Money*, in 1843, when almost nothing on American numismatics was to be found in print. Even though it was superseded by subsequent publications, "Breck on Continental Paper Money" became iconic because he was the first to publish on that subject, and also because this was Breck's sole numismatic work. Or so we have always believed. As it happened, Breck did produce—albeit obscurely—a different numismatic publication, on a specific variety of coinage, in a heretofore forgotten volume. He even inscribed and corrected the book at hand, leaving no doubt that his numismatic interest extended beyond paper money into the realm of coinage.



Samuel Breck ca. 1860

Samuel Breck was one of those historical characters who seemed to have done everything and known everyone. He was born in Boston as a subject of King George III, lived through America's first birth of freedom during the Revolution, and survived to experience the beginnings of its new birth of freedom during the Civil War. His father, also named Samuel, was appointed by King Louis XVI as fiscal agent for the French forces in America, allowing the young man to meet a number of America's Founding Fathers. Samuel himself attended military school in France from 1783 to 1787. Upon his return to America, the senior Breck gave him the eye-popping sum of \$10,000 to start his own shipping business, and two years later—in 1792—the Breck family moved to Philadelphia, just as the U.S. Mint was opening for business. (For reference, it should be noted that the Mint Act of 1792 fixed the salary of Director David Rittenhouse at \$2,000 per annum).

Prosperous in business, Breck experienced an up-and-down tenure in politics, where his stubborn dedication to principle led to making bad career moves. In 1821, while serving in the Pennsylvania Senate, he introduced a bill calling for abolition

of slavery in the state, which cost him re-election. Elected to the US Congress in 1822, he was not returned two years later because he was the only member of the Pennsylvania delegation to vote for John Quincy Adams when the election of 1824 was thrown into the House of Representatives. It might be said of his brief turns as a politician that they were notable mainly for their ethical "Breckxits."

Breck's devotion to principle was much more appreciated in the charitable institutions to which he dedicated much of his life. He served as the President of the Philadelphia Athenaeum, Vice President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and President of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, where his fellow-trustees included prominent early numismatists Jacob Giles Morris and Joshua Francis Fisher, as well as the sixth Director of the US Mint, Dr. Robert Maskell Patterson, who occasionally hosted meetings of the board of trustees in his office. Breck was also the founder and first President of the Society of the Sons of New England of the City and County of Philadelphia, under the auspices of which he would issue his second numismatic publication, published two years after his first.

This Society of the Sons of New England that Breck founded in the City of Brotherly Love was a charitable and fraternal organization, a species of nonprofit more common in the antebellum era than today. It was an era of mobility—people moved for economic opportunity, to acquire property, to escape the complications of their current lives, for sheer restlessness—so it was also an era of associations. Writing in the early 1830s, after extensively touring America, French observer Alexis de Tocqueville noted "Americans of all ages, all conditions, all minds, constantly unite... There is nothing...that deserves more to attract our regard than the intellectual and moral associations of America." Breck no doubt grasped that one way to welcome newcomers to Philadelphia and to cement the city's social bonds, was to associate together men, who like him, traced their roots to the fastnesses of the New England states. This Society of the Sons of New England was to stand for more than genealogical nostalgia, for it incorporated a charitable and benevolent mission for relieving suffering in the Quaker City. It was natural that Breck should be chosen as the Society's first President, and equally apropos that he was selected as the speaker for the dinner in December of 1844 that marked the organization's first anniversary. After all, the genesis of his *Historical Sketch of Continental Paper Money* was a pair of addresses that Breck had made to the prestigious American Philosophical Society in 1840 and 1843.

An address prepared and delivered by Samuel Breck was no schlock operation. Just as he had thoroughly researched his talks on Continental Paper Money by gathering a large notebook full of Continental notes, the research itinerary for his address on the early history of New England covered:

Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts*, Thatcher's *Plymouth*, Cotton Mather's "various works", Knowles' *Life of Roger Williams*, *History of Connecticut by a Gentleman of the Province*, London Edition, 1781, Hazard's *State Papers*, and "some other writers."

The result was a multi-faceted chronicle of New England, starting with the May-

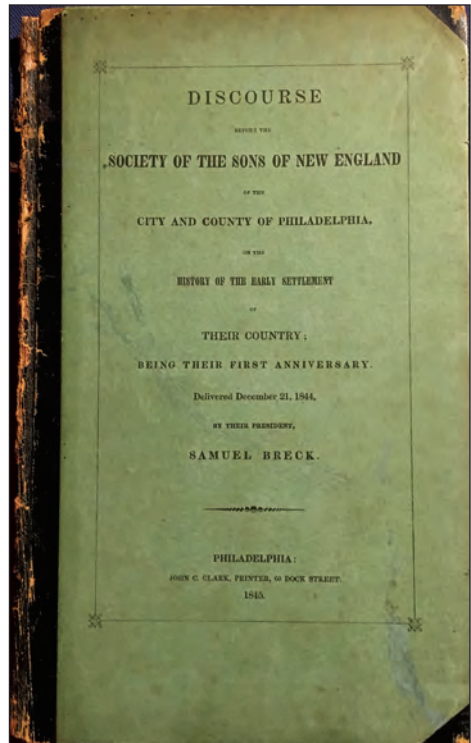
flower Compact, the landing at Plymouth Rock, and the Puritans' subsequent struggles both for doctrinal purity and for sheer survival. Breck's narrative traipsed around New England, lingering on the stories of Roger Williams' founding of Rhode Island, and the growth of the New Haven colony into latter-day Connecticut. He closed with the tragic tale of King Phillip's War, in which the native inhabitants sought—belatedly, and ultimately, unsuccessfully—to stem the tide of European encroachment upon their lands.

Breck's history holds up surprisingly well, given the fact that we today are 165 years removed from it. Some flaws inhabit its text, stemming mainly from social changes that have occurred during that span. Today, we would want to hear about the roles played by women and people of color in the region's development, and we certainly could do without repeated references to members of the local

Indian tribes as "savages." During the Christmas holidays of 1844, however, the Society of the Sons of New England was so pleased with the address given by their *paterfamilias* that they resolved to print it for posterity, and formed a committee to see Breck's speech through to publication. When committee members asked their President for permission to publish, Breck demurred unless he could underwrite all costs, so that the Society would not have to expend its charitable funds for what he considered a selfish purpose. The Society agreed, and early in 1845, Breck's address appeared under the comprehensive title of: *Discourse Before the Society of the Sons of New England of the City and County of Philadelphia, on the History of the Early Settlement of Their Country, Being Their First Anniversary. Delivered December 21, 1844, by Their President, Samuel Breck.*

The *Discourse* is an octavo booklet of 44 pages, with the copy at hand encased in a battered, but intact black half morocco binding. Unsurprisingly, the printer was John C. Clark, of 60 Dock Street, the same man responsible for setting Breck's *Historical Sketch of Continental Paper Money* into type just two years prior. The exact number of copies of the *Discourse* printed is unclear, but it must have been enough to provide one to every Society member, while reserving a number for distribution to outsiders. An educated guess might place it in the neighborhood of 200 copies.

Breck was well into his *Discourse*—on page 25 of the printed version—before he



Breck's 1845 *Discourse Before the Society of the Sons of New England*...

unregenerate individual, or one disconnected with the church, was forbidden by law, to be called *good man*; an epithet of courtesy then in use, prefixed to the names of the orthodox. In short, they condemned all for heretics, who durst oppose them. They went further; they assumed one of the chief attributes of sovereignty, and as early as 1652, passed a law, authorizing the coining of money, which was high treason by the laws of England. Yet, with the New England spirit of independence, she continued to circulate metallic money of her own making, for more than one hundred years. Some of the pine-tree shillings of 1652 may be seen in the cabinets of collectors. ~~Massachusetts~~ <sup>among</sup> was the first, ~~if not the only~~ <sup>of</sup> state after the peace of 1783, that established a mint, from which she sent forth copper coin, until the creation of the national mint.

Some other political movements manifested impatience under European dependence. The two colonies of Hartford and New Haven had virtually proclaimed themselves independent in their code of unpublished laws. A historian of Connecticut gives the following item as a constitutional provision. "The governor and magistrates, convened in general assembly, are the supreme power, under God, of this independent dominion: and from the determination of the assembly, no appeal shall be made."

Some pains have been taken to disprove the claim to republicanism, set up by the historians of New England, for their forefathers. There is not space here to vindicate that claim. A writer in Philadelphia, of great ability,\* has discussed the subject in considerable detail, before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and admits that although they were not democrats, when swayed by church government, yet were they not monarchists. The *juste milieu*, the true medium, is conservative republicanism. And that was the essence and spirit of their political creed. Roger Williams, who repudiated church government, and all restraint upon conscience, derived by the aid of Sir Henry Vane, the charter of the colony he founded,

\* Job R. Tyson, Esq.

got to his paragraph on New England coinage. It would be natural to assume that this subject would arise in the course of discussing the Bay Colony's finances or economics, but no: Breck's context was the stubborn independent streak of the Puritan fathers. "In short," as he summarized his prefatory discussion, "they condemned all for heretics, who durst oppose them." (Note that Breck's use of "durst" employs an archaic form of the verb "to dare," and is not a premonitory vision of a 20<sup>th</sup> century dealer in numismatic literature). Breck continued:

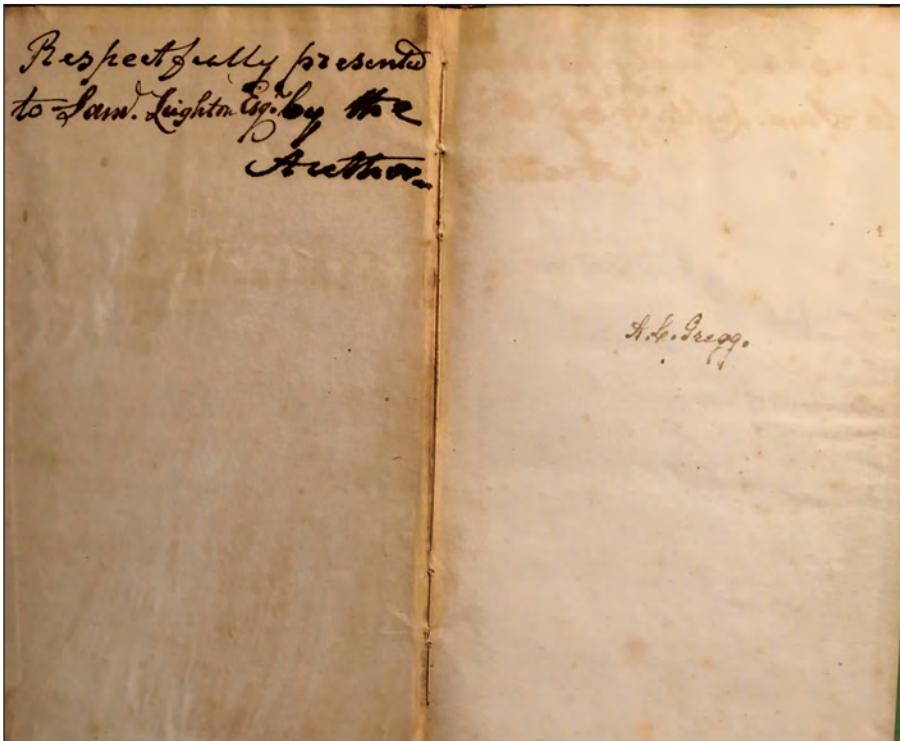
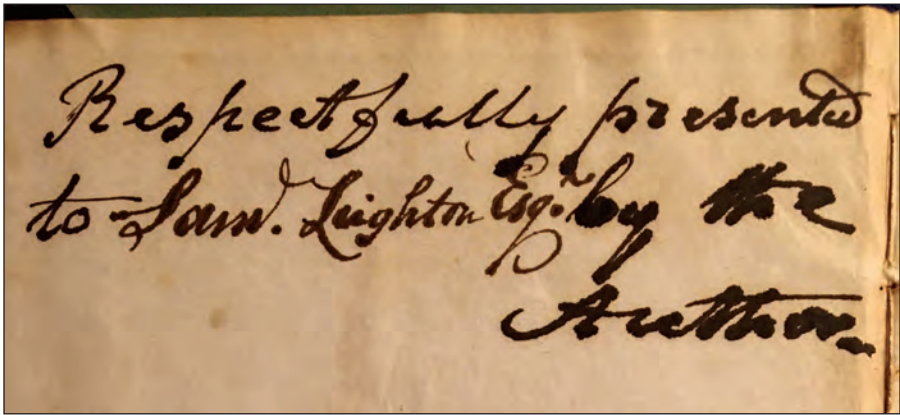
They went further; they assumed one of the chief attributes of sovereignty, and as early as 1652, passed a law, authorizing the coining of money, which was high treason by the laws of England. Yet, with the New England spirit of independence, she continued to circulate metallic money of her own making, for more than one hundred years. Some of the pine-tree shillings of 1652 may be seen in the cabinets of collectors. Massachusetts was the first, if not the only state after the peace of 1783, that established a mint, from which she sent forth copper coin, until the creation of the national mint.

Breck's thorough research served him well. Although he doesn't mention Rev. Joseph Barlow Felt's 1839 book, *An Historical Account of Massachusetts Currency*, Felt may have been among the "some other writers" whose works Breck had consulted. One of the volumes Breck specifically cited, Thomas Hutchinson's *The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1765), describes, on p. 178, Massachusetts minting pine tree shillings, and was apparently his main source of information. He was also clearly aware of the state coppers produced by Massachusetts in 1787–1788.

It is apparent from the quoted passage that Breck had seen some actual pine tree shillings in collectors' cabinets. We know the names of a handful of fellow Philadelphian numismatists who may have opened their collections for research. In the *American Journal of Numismatics* for July of 1872, William Dubois contributed a letter that included this passage:

Some thirty years ago, there were four of us, in Philadelphia, engaged in forming cabinets of coins; three on private account, one for the public. We often conferred together, and helped each other. As time rolled on, one was buried in the Pacific Ocean, on his way home from California; another went down in the Arctic, returning from Liverpool; the other two went and came safely, and Mr. Mickley was one of them.

The "four amigos" were Dr. Lewis Roper (?–1850, buried in the Pacific); Jacob Giles Morris (1800–1854, who went down with the steam ship *Arctic*); Joseph J. Mickley (born 1799, still going strong in 1872), and Dubois himself (born 1810, collecting for the Mint Cabinet of coins). Three other prominent early Philadelphia numismatists also may have been sources. John McAllister, Jr. (1786–1877), wrote the famed McAllister Memorandum after interviewing retired Chief Coiner Adam Eckfeldt on April 9, 1844, just months before Breck delivered his *Discourse*. Dr. James Mease (1771–1846), physician, geologist, and author of the first tomato-based recipe for ketchup, wrote first American articles on medals (1821) and coins (1838). Joshua



Breck's *Discourse Before the Society of the Sons of New England*... inscription on the inside cover and first free flyleaf, and a close-up of the inscription (above)

Francis Fisher (1807–1873), a “Copperhead” Democrat during the Civil War, was also an early medal collector and numismatic author. The “cabinets of collectors” possessed by Roper, Morris, and Mickley (as documented by the sales catalogs for their collections) contained pine tree shillings, as did the Mint Cabinet of Coins curated by Dubois (documented by “the interesting suite of Massachusetts silver coins, of the date 1652” mentioned on p. 127 of Dubois’s 1846 catalog, *Pledges of History*). Records of the contents of the cabinets of McAllister, Mease and Fisher are sketchy, but very well may have included Massachusetts coinage. In any case, with all seven of these Philadelphia collectors alive and active in 1844, Breck had ample authority for saying that “pine-tree shillings may be seen in the cabinets of collectors.”

The *Discourse*’s paragraph on numismatics contains one error: Breck’s assertion that Massachusetts was the only state to operate a Mint between 1783 and 1792. As we shall see, however, he became aware of the mistake after the *Discourse* was published, and in at least one case, apparently made corrections to the printed copy.

Which brings us to the reason why this newly-discovered numismatic “Breck-spliot” is being presented in the “Associations” column of *The Asylum*, rather than in an article. The discovery copy of Breck’s *Discourse* is inscribed, on the inside front board, in thick-stroked brown ink, “Respectfully presented to Saml. Leighton Esq. by the Author.” In the absence of a signature, and without a verified genuine sample of Samuel Breck’s handwriting with which to compare it, absolute certainty that the inscription was written by the author is elusive, for recipients have been known to write “Presented by the Author” in their own books. The presence of the prefatory word “Respectfully,” however, renders it far more likely that this inscription was actually penned by the author.

Another scrap of evidence suggesting the authorial ink pen was at work is found on p. 25, with emendations made to the numismatic paragraph in the same hand, employing the same ink, as the front matter inscription. Moreover, it corrects the printed error. The original printed sentence reads:

Massachusetts was the first, if not the only state after the peace of 1783, that established a mint, from which she sent forth copper coin, until the creation of the national mint.

The inked hand-edits correct the sentence to read:

Massachusetts was among the first of the states after the peace of 1783, that established a mint, from which she sent forth copper coin, until the creation of the national mint.

Breck had somehow learned, between the time when the *Discourse* was printed and the time when he inscribed the book, that the states of Connecticut (1785) and New Jersey (1786) had enacted legislation for coinage, as had the future state of Vermont (1785). Hence his correction of his former claim of state coinage exclusivity for Massachusetts.

The identity of the “Saml. Leighton, Esq.” to whom Breck inscribed this copy of the *Discourse* is not entirely clear. The leading candidate is Samuel Leighton, Esq., whose birth year (1771) makes him an exact contemporary of Samuel Breck. Leigh-

ton would have been available to receive the book in 1845, since he lived until 1848. Although Judge Leighton was born and also expired in Maine, there is a possible connection to the Breck family through his father, also named Samuel Leighton. The elder Leighton was a Captain in Col. James Scamman's 30<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot from Kittery Maine, which served in Boston 1775-1776, including at the Battle of Bunker Hill. It is certainly possible that Captain Leighton and the elder Samuel Breck became acquainted during that time, and that the acquaintance extended to their respective namesake sons.

A later owner has also signed Leighton's copy of Breck's *Discourse*, on the first free fly, by the name of "A.C. Gregg" (or possibly, "A.L. Gregg"). Multiple people by these names turn up in Internet searches, but none who would be a persuasive—or even suggestive—match to the signature on the page.

In any case, this newly discovered association copy informs us that Samuel Breck's numismatic interest—or at least, his numismatic attention—extended beyond paper currency to coinage. His mention of pine tree shillings, while not the first in print, came early enough in the game to have some significance to coin collectors then, and to numismatic literature collectors now. His care to correct his printed error about the Massachusetts mint demonstrates that he continued to learn about numismatics, perhaps from the collectors whose cabinets he viewed in Philadelphia. While all of this is new and useful information, the sheer rarity of the *Discourse* assures that one thing will not change: we shall continue to hear about "Breck on Continental Paper Money" much more than we hear of his second numismatic-related publication, "Breck on Massachusetts Coinage."



## Contribute to the next issue of **The Asylum**

### *Evolution of a Numismatic Library*

How your library grown and changed over the years? Has the focus of your collecting changed over time or have your studies piqued your interest in completely different areas? Have you added an addition to your home, rented a storage unit or filled your spouse's china cabinet to hold your expanding collection?

We would love to read about how your library is arranged and decorated with unusual numismatic art and ephemeral items, too. As always, please share lots of photos of your inner sanctum and treasures.

Please send submissions to [asylum@coinbooks.org](mailto:asylum@coinbooks.org) by May 1 to be included.

# A Chance Encounter

By Pete Smith

How much can a chance encounter alter the trajectory of a life? Perhaps one such chance encounter had a large impact on my interest in an area of numismatic literature.

In April of 1990 I attended the Central States show in Milwaukee. My local club, the Northwest Coin Club, had been selected to host the Central States show in 1992. Several

members of the club went to Milwaukee to learn what we could about hosting the show. By 1992 I had been elected president of the host club.

I was rooming with Bill Daehn. On the morning of April 7, Bill and I got on the hotel elevator to go down to the lobby and across to the MECCA Convention Center. We were joined on the elevator by a man that neither of us knew. He was in town to attend a post card show held at the same building in a different hall.

I don't recall much of the conversation. As we were leaving the elevator, he gave me a post card good for free admission to the show. He probably had attended the first day of the show and did not intend to go back. I doubt if I would have paid \$3.50 to attend. However, I can be motivated by something that is free. When I had some idle time, I wondered over to check out the show.

Craig Whitford had a table there. I knew Craig from the Early American Coppers Club and knew a little about his interest in post cards with numismatic themes including cards with pictures of the U.S. Mint. I sat down for a conversation.

Whitford collected items related to the mints and was promoting a commemoration of the 1792 Mint Act for the two hundredth anniversary in 1992. He established the Numismatic Card Company to publish reprints of some of these cards.

At some point Craig told me about Frank Stewart, his involvement with the site of the first mint and his book, *History of the First United States Mint*. Apparently his passion for the topic was infectious.

Whitford had commissioned Natalie Hause to paint an interpretation of the Lamasure painting of Ye Olde Mint. (*Secret History* page 192) He had the painting tucked away at the back of his booth and brought it out to show me. The Lamasure and Hause paintings show the first mint in a bucolic setting in open country. Perhaps this planted a seed in my mind to want to paint a more accurate view of the Mint buildings.

In the years following our discussion, I bought a reprint of the Stewart book and read it. Then I went on to buy an original copy of the book and every other mint his-





Numismatic Card Company version of "Ye Old Mint" painted by Natalie Hause

tory I could find.

On October 6, 1995, Whitford conducted *The Numismatic Card Company Archive Collection of U.S. Mint Memorabilia*. I submitted some conservative bids for the sale and later bought a larger group of remainders from Whitford after the sale. These included an example of the 1915 Stewart calendar. (lot 242, *Secret History* AO-221)

Lot 268 of the sale was the John McAllister memorandum discussing the 1792 half dime. That lot was recognized for its importance and acquired by Carl Herkowitz. His passion for the subject eventually led to a book on the topic of 1792 coinage.

I expanded my collection to include contemporary illustrations published in *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*, July 17, 1852; *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, December 1861; *Harper's Weekly* June 19, 1880, July 15, 1893, September 2, 1893 and August 10, 1901; and *Scientific American* September 1, 1901.

For the 2000 ANA convention in Philadelphia, I placed an exhibit on "An Illustrated History of Four Mints in Philadelphia." This took second place in the local interest class behind Phil Greenslet's medals of Franklin. I also made a presentation to the Numismatic Bibliomania Society on the literature and illustrations of the Philadelphia mints.

Around 2007 I learned that Len Augsburg and Joel Orosz were starting to work on a book of "Illustrations of the First U.S. Mint." This was later to be published under a different title. I contacted the authors and we began an extensive email exchange before I received a draft of the book for my review and comments. Several lots from the Whitford sale are illustrated in *The Secret History of the First U.S. Mint*. Also illustrated are paintings showing my interpretation of the first mint. (*Secret History* pages 60, 61)

Of course, as a collector, I kept the free admission post card. It was addressed to a name and location in Amityville, New York. A check with Google indicates that he was a member of the Amityville Historical Society and contributed to a book of local history illustrated by post cards. As of 2019 at age 80 he still lives with his wife at the same address.

I believe I would not have attended the post card show if I had not been given the free admission card. The impact of my conversation with Craig Whitford is a little harder to judge. His influence was effective because I already had an interest in the history of the mint. Perhaps I would have gotten to the same destination via another route. Or perhaps, without that chance encounter, my life would have gone in a totally different direction.



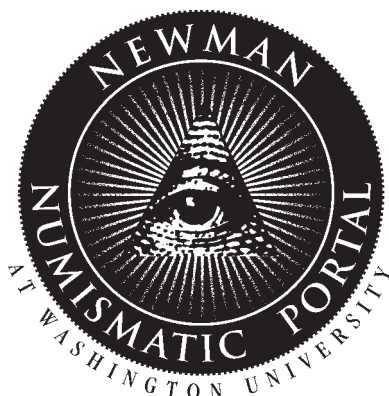
## Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society Invites Applications for Newman Grants

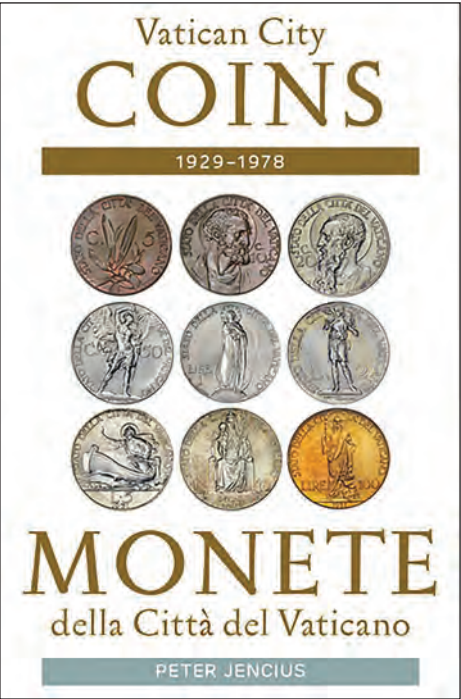
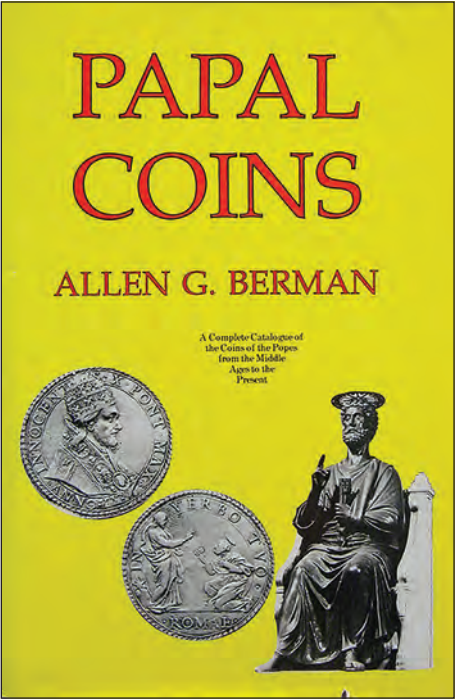
The Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society (EPNNES) announces the opening of the application period for the 2020 Newman Grant program. Newman Grants are designed to financially assist numismatic authors and organizations pursuing original research in American numismatics. This is the second year of the program. In 2019, the Newman Grant program supported research projects related to colonial numismatics, U.S. federal coinage, counterfeit detection, and other areas.

Authors, researchers, and numismatic organizations are encouraged to apply for amounts between \$1,000 and \$5,000. Awards may be applied toward related research costs including but not limited to photography, reproduction of research material and graphic art services, database access fees, and travel. Electronic publications will be preferred as EPNNES wishes to direct funds toward expenses specifically related to numismatic research, rather than the print publication of research. Newman Grant awardees agree to non-exclusive publication of their research on the Newman Numismatic Portal ([NewmanPortal.org](https://NewmanPortal.org)). EPNNES intends to make approximately half a dozen grants in 2020.

The Newman Grant program is administered for EPNNES by the Newman Numismatic Portal (NNP). Applications may be found on the Newman Numismatic Portal and should be submitted to [NNPCurator@wustl.edu](mailto:NNPCurator@wustl.edu). The application deadline is April 1, 2020, with the grant awards to be announced on May 25, 2020, coincident with the late Eric P. Newman's birthday.

It is the hope of EPNNES that this program will continue the legacy of Eric P. Newman in a way that would reflect his high standards for numismatic research.





# The Coins of the Fisherman: Two Books on Papal and Vatican Numismatics

Including a Review of *Vatican City Coins 1929–1978*

by Peter Jencius

By William Van Ornum

Before studying numismatics, I co-taught a course in Rome for Marist College, where I am senior full professor. Rome and the Vatican held endless fascination for me with experiences as varied as being submerged under the main altar where Saint Peter's bones are said to be, or a night-time ride on a mountain bike bumping over cobblestones in a route that began at Termini train station, circled the Coliseum, followed the Tiber to the Vatican, where I saw that one light was on in the Apostolic Palace. The Pope was still awake. The biggest thrill was meeting Pope John Paul II in a private audience (previously I had conducted psychological research on obsessive-compulsive disorder and how it is manifested in Catholics), and worshipping with him in his private chapel as he said Mass.

Allen G. Berman's classic (1990) book, *Papal Coins: A Complete Catalogue of the Coins of the Popes from the Middle Ages to the Present* has helped to keep my fascination with all coins Papal flourishing in this 21st century. I consider it a monumental achievement, relevant to numismatists now, organizing over 3500 coins from the 8th century through the 20th, both with major themes as well as a primer of history, symbols, heraldry, inscriptions, allegory, biblical themes, and architecture. Not to mention the saints, who perhaps comprise the most frequent depiction on the reverse side of papal coins.

On a technical note, papal coins are those from the 8th century onward until 1929, when the Vatican had become its own city-state, with physical boundaries of approximately a half-square mile being self-contained within the city of Rome. Previously the Papal throne had been located in various places, including Avignon, France. Coins from 1929 to the present are known as "Vatican coins" and it is helpful to use both of these terms in search queries both on Internet searches and in viewing auction catalogs to pull up the full range of coins, as these terms may be used interchangeably in search queries.

Berman's genius gives us a clear and basic picture of major themes in papal history. We learn that Papal coins began to be minted in the 8th century, around the time of Pope Gregory III. In the 15th century, saints began to be depicted on the coins, a trend that continued for centuries. During the Renaissance beauty emerged everywhere. Golden coins of St. Peter, frightened on the Sea of Galilee surrounded by a tempest while in his small boat, are popular in many years. There is a most basic allegory: Christ is giving the keys of the kingdom to St. Peter, and, by extension, these keys are passed down from St. Peter to the Popes. Yet one can see even more drama—the Church is coming under siege, because of Gutenberg's press the scrip-

tures are now available to the common person (and these folks will come to different conclusions than the church hierarchy). Soon Christianity will be torn apart by wars, schisms, reformation and then counter-reformation.

By the 17th century, the craft of art itself has improved—similarly does the beauty and detail of the papal coins. Later the Napoleonic Wars and economic chaos cause a temporary dissolution of the Papal states. In 1866 Papal Lira were struck and this brought the Vatican coinage in line with the standards of the Latin Monetary Union (LMU). Now the Pope's coinage provided reciprocal legal tender for the coins of member states and included France, Italy, and Switzerland. In 1929 the Lateran Treaty solidified the Papal State and coins were once again minted as Lira, with the highest being a gold coin of 100 Lira.

There is a special focus on *Sede Vacante* coins, that period of time that starts immediately after a Pope dies and, while Cardinals travel, arrive at Rome, and vote until there is white smoke coming from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel. These coins have special interest to those studying the changes in power and policy that occur when a new Papacy begins. Certainly the change in Pope from Benedict XVI to Francis brought in a new wind. Studying *Sede Vacante* coins will lead to other times in history when the Bark of Peter changed its course.

If this were not enough to create a standard and lasting numismatic volume, Bergman provides the 1990 values for all of these coins in Good Very Fine, using numismatic auction sale prices as a reference. It would be helpful if future works of this nature provided both European grading as well as the Sheldon scale used by PCGS, NGC, and other authentication services. There are helpful appendices of monograms, numismatic mint marks, auxiliary arms, and papal arms themselves. A four-page bibliography includes essential works, mostly in Italian. Joseph Coffin's *Coins of the Popes* and articles in *World Coins* and *The Numismatist* might be especially helpful for those beginning on a journey into papal and Vatican coinage.

At the end of the book there are 77 plates of Papal coins, usually with 15–20 coins per plate. These are correlated by number with coins in the narrative of the catalog, where there are nicely drawn sketches of many coins.

For those interested in church history as it may correlate with numismatic history, there are two books that may be of interest—the *History of the Church of Christ, Volumes 1-9*, by French historian Henri Daniel-Rops (London: J. Dent, and NY: Doubleday Image Books) and *History of the Church, Volumes 1-3*, by Philip Hughes (London: Sheed and Ward, 1936-1948).

*Papal Coins: A Complete Catalog of the Coins of the Popes from the Middle Ages to the Present*, by Allen G. Berman will, in this reviewer's opinion, continue to remain a numismatic classic.

## *Vatican City Coins 1929–1978 by Peter Jencius*

A freshly minted book, *Vatican City Coins 1929–1978*, has just been released at January's New York numismatic convention, written by Peter Jencius of [vaticancoins.com](http://vaticancoins.com). In the tradition of other numismatic families, Jencius was trained in the intricacies of these coins by Edward Jencius, his father, a longtime authority and numismatic dealer of Papal and Vatican Coins. Jencius dedicates the book to his father; on the dedication

page, there is an endearing photo of Peter Jencius as a young lad in 1978 standing in front of Bernini's columns and a later on from 1999 where father and son stand in the same place.

*Vatican City Coins* is a luscious book, an experience in itself. The crisp photos form a tapestry of shades of color (with many enlarged 3–4 times, no magnifier needed), have a three-dimensional quality and are neatly organized by the three Popes in whose reigns they occurred. After the coins there are photos of the collectable coin containers, made with deeply dyed leather and plush interior. There is even an alligator folder.

Near the end of the book, very rare offerings are described and shown. There is a 1930 proof set, originally packaged in glassine envelopes. Ten of these were constructed and given to high-ranking prelates. The coins themselves, a special edition in which all coins are silver and in grades SP65 to SP67, form a collage on the opposite page of their description.

A most striking and beautiful exhibit is the “Metal Roll of 50 Gold Coins of 1936,” contained in a meticulously crafted metal case and stored in a royal blue leather container with lush light amber background surrounding the roll of 50 coins. The roll has Pope Pius XI's coat of arms and it is marked GIOILLERIA A. CASARTELLI MILANO (A. Casartelli Jeweler's Shop, Milan), photo courtesy of Matteo Cavedoni.

After admiring and absorbing the visual details of *Vatican City Coins*, it is time to get down to brass tacks. There is enough highly detailed information about the coins and their mintages to satisfy the most meticulous numismatist.

As noted in the book, mintages are provided for all coins taken from Vatican ordinances authorizing coin issues as published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, the official gazette of the Holy See. Regularly issued non-*Au* coins typically are in the tens of thousands, with a median perhaps around 80,000 (my estimate) and a highest mintage of 1,300,000. The *Au* coins appear to have a mode of 1,000 with the highest mintage of 23,325 in the Jubilee Year of 1933.

Things get a bit intriguing with metals and alloys used in minting Vatican coins. Of course, there are *Au* and *Ag* for higher value coins. There are three other alloys used, and Jencius notes that these are proprietary alloys developed by the Italian mint in Rome itself. These are “Acomital” (stainless steel with iron and 17.5% to 19% chromium); “Bronzital” (copper with 7.5% to 8.5% aluminum and 0.3% to 0.6% titanium); and Italma (an aluminum alloy with 3.5% magnesium and 0.3% manganese).



A sample page from *Vatican City Coins 1929–1978* by Peter Jencius

The Bronzital coins age differently than American copper coins, perhaps in a deeper shade of brown.

Jencius and Berman make one aware of intricacies and nuances that need to be navigated when taking an interest in these coins. Berman's valuations of papal coins are, as he notes, taken from European auction records when the dollar is particularly weak. His *Au* and *Ag* listings are given for Good Very Fine (gVF), and he notes this is often the equivalent of American Very Fine Plus (VF+) or choice Very Fine. Berman's book is copyrighted in 1991. Jencius uses the Sheldon Scale based on the authentication services as well as the Italian Rarity Scale of R1–R5. Using the auction house of Nomisma Spa as a guide, those searching for coins in Europe may need to understand a current European grading system: FS (Fondo Specchio/Proof); FDC (Fior di conio/Uncirculated); SPL (Splendido/Extremely Fine); BB (Bellissimo/Very Fine); MB (Molto bello/Fine); B (Bello/Good Fine); and D (Discreto/Discret).

Given that the European system also as plus (+) and minus (–) and the Sheldon scale offers 70 classifications, there are probably going to be interesting things going on when one scale is converted to another.

*Vatican City Coins: 1929–1978* offers a very appealing visual presentation of the coins of three Popes and a range of technical numismatic detail. I think this book will be of interest to those who have never thought of collecting Vatican coins as well as experienced numismatists.

Taken together, the books by Berman and Jencius bring the beauty and history of both Papal and Vatican coins to 21st century readers.

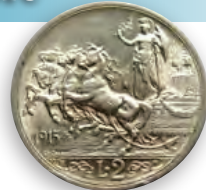
*Vatican City Coins 1929–1978* by Peter Jencius is available at [vaticancoins.com](http://vaticancoins.com) for \$34.99.

William Van Ornum has written about numismatics for *America* and *National Review Online*. He has contributed many publications in his field of clinical psychology. He is (retired) professor of psychology at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY.



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# That Other Book Club

By Pete Smith

When the Numismatic Bibliomania Society was organized in 1979, there was no guarantee that it would succeed. Under the enthusiastic leadership of founders Jack Collins and George Kolbe, it has grown and thrived for forty years. Such was not the case with a previous attempt to form a numismatic book club.

The November 23, 1974, issue of *Numismatic News Weekly* contained this brief article:

## Book Club Formed For Numismatists

“A book club for collectors, Numismatic Athenaeum, has been organized to promote study and understanding of all phases of numismatics, to assist members in obtaining new books and reference works at discount prices, and to disseminate numismatic information on Oriental, Western, Ancient and modern subjects and also in the fields of syngraphics and exonomia.

Membership is open to collectors who are serious about the hobby and information is available from The Numismatic Athenaeum, 614 S. Johnson St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.”

An article with nearly identical text appeared in *The Centinel*, journal of the Central States Numismatic Society, in their Volume 22, No. 4, for April 1975, page 30. After that the inky trail of publication dries up and vanishes. The phrase, “Numismatic Athenaeum” does not appear in 130 years of *The Numismatist*. A search on the Newman Numismatic portal produced only the article in *The Centinel*.

It was not hard to figure out that 614 South Johnson Street was the residence of Patrick D. Hogan. Patrick Dennis Hogan was born on March 18, 1939. The 1940 Census shows that he was born in Iowa and his parents were Cletus and Ruby Hogan. In 1940 they lived at 319 South Johnson, not far from his later address. A 1956 newspaper article shows that Mr. & Mrs. Cletus Hogan lived at 614 South Johnson.

As he joined the American Vecturist Association, he gave his profession as repairman. That includes all we know of his personal life.

Hogan joined the Numismatic Bibliomania Society as a Charter member but did not contribute any article to *The Asylum*. The Newman Numismatic Portal has 245 citations for Hogan. They are references to club memberships and publications but include no background information.

Hogan joined the American Numismatic Association in 1968. He was active with the Oriental Numismatic Society and served as Regional Secretary for North America until 1982. He was also active with Numismatics International as Life member #69 and as assistant editor for their newsletter from 1970 to 1973. He had an interest in exonomia and was a member of TAMS, the AVA and other token organizations.

The building at 614 South Johnson was demolished and a new apartment building constructed in 1983. Hogan then moved down the block to an apartment at 629

South Johnson Street. By that time his literary contributions had stopped.

There are many directory services on the Internet that will provide current addresses and phone numbers. They indicate that Hogan is still alive at age 80. One of these indicates that Patrick lives with Ruby Elizabeth Hogan at age 110. However, the numbers and addresses provided are not active. Another source indicates that he lives in a low income senior apartment complex. They cannot tell me if he is a tenant there.

A headstone at Saint Joseph Cemetery New in Iowa City shows life dates for Cletus J. Hogan as 1904 to 1978 and Ruby E. Hogan as 1909 to 2003.

As a numismatist in his thirties, Hogan was very knowledgeable in Oriental numismatics and active in hobby organizations. He attempted to promote an interest in numismatic books but showed no results. At around age forty he converted some club memberships to life memberships suggesting that he had sufficient funds and interest in continuing in the hobby. Then he dropped from sight for no apparent reason. The full story remains to be told.



<p><b>STEPHEN ALBUM RARE COINS</b></p>  <p><b>stevealbum.com</b></p>	<p><i>Connect with your fellow bibliomaniacs!</i></p>  <p>INSTAGRAM numismaticbibliomania</p>  <p>FACEBOOK Numismatic-Bibliomania-Society</p>
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# Throwing Light on the Past:

## *Roman History from Coins* by Michael Grant

By David Pickup

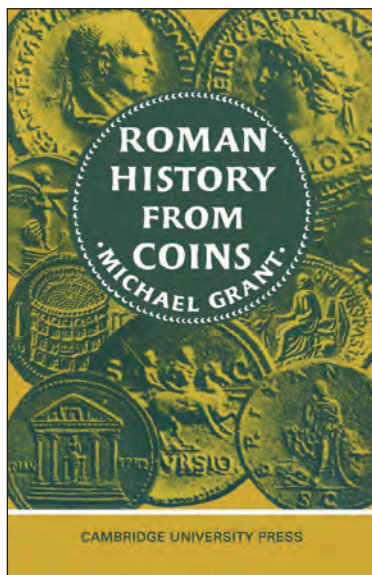
One of my Christmas presents was a book on the first Jewish Revolt against Rome in AD 66–74—something nice and festive. This led me to borrow a book from my local library on the Roman army. Both books are published by Osprey Publishing,<sup>1</sup> who have a very extensive and well-illustrated series on military history. I was struck by how many coins were used to illustrate Roman history and military life.

This made me think of a little paperback book I bought in a market in Nottingham over thirty years ago, which cost me 50 pence. The book is *Roman History from Coins* by Michael Grant. It is interesting re-reading a book like this. It first came out in hardback in 1957, a year, in fact, before I first appeared. My paperback came out in 1968 and cost about a pound. You can still get copies on the internet for a few pounds. Grant compares the current coins with classical issues and makes the point that Roman coins were often articles for propaganda. His little book, which is under a hundred pages, is well-illustrated with coins and the personalities of their issuers, the coinage of the empire and how coins are “evidence for the past,” including some people who are unknown to history. It is an inspiring book and encourages the reader to look a bit more carefully and imaginatively at their collection. It has inspired me to look out for that series of legionary coins struck by Gallienus in the late third century. I should not have told you of course as you will all want to do this and prices will shoot up.

The book was reviewed in *The Numismatic Chronicle*<sup>2</sup> in 1959 and the reviewer says the book is based on a series of lectures to the Faculty of Classics at Cambridge given “some years ago” to show how coins “throw light on the past.” Grant argues that coins are just as valuable as evidence to the historian as written documents.

Michael Grant CBE (21 November 1914–4 October 2004) was a classicist, numismatist, and author of numerous books on ancient history. He described himself as “one of the very few freelancers in the field of ancient history: a rare phenomenon.” He published over seventy books. Grant’s collection of almost seven hundred Roman coins are now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Grant’s publishing success was controversial. According to *The Times*, “Grant’s ap-



proach to classical history was beginning to divide critics.” Numismatists felt that his academic work was beyond reproach, but some academics balked at his attempt to condense a survey of Roman literature into 300 pages, and felt (in the words of one reviewer) that “even the most learned and gifted of historians should observe a speed-limit.” His books remained popular with the public. From 1966 until his death, Grant lived with his wife in Gattaiola, a village near Lucca in Tuscany. His autobiography, *My First Eighty Years*, appeared in 1994<sup>3</sup> and tells us the lectures that formed the book were given in 1955. Nearly forty years later he still felt the “battle” to persuade ancient historians that coins are essential evidence is not won and the “historical importance” of coins is not “fully appreciated.”

He spent a lot of time abroad and was able to visit many institutions that had collections of coins. He found one cabinet in Europe locked and sealed because of a court dispute between “former collaborators.” He was allowed to remove the rear of the cabinet to look at the contents. At another venue he was told the only person who held keys to the coin cabinets was ninety-seven years old, lived twenty miles away and he could not be disturbed. He visited a coin dealer in Sofia and was about to buy a rare Roman coin with an attractive patina. He was then showed other rarities all with the same patina. Suspicious, he made an excuse and left. He was later told that they were fakes and had been immersed in river Danube mud for two years to colour up nicely. He also read in a book that was one hundred years old about a collection of imperial sestertii and other copper coins and traced the collection to Le Mans in Paris, where he was referred to a local schoolmaster who led him to a room in a public building. He found himself, “...knee-deep in coins that had never been sorted or catalogued.”

Why are there not many books like this now? It is good value for the money, informative, and an easy read. It is of course a book of its time as all books are. Grant says that modern coins are flat. He meant flat both in the sense of low relief and uninteresting. Modern to him meant coins of the 1950s. I think coins that are modern to us are very a lot better. There are far more commemoratives and historical coins available to the collector and design has changed.

This book is a delight, written by a true scholar. Although written over fifty years ago, scholarship and the camaraderie between collectors is just as real now as it was then. It upholds the value of collecting coins which are pieces of historical evidence in their own right. It also demonstrates that propaganda, fake news, global currency and obsession with celebrity are not new.



#### ENDNOTES

- 1 ospreypublishing.com/
- 2 Carson, R. A. G. *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society*, vol. 19, 1959, pp. 235–237. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/42662380](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42662380). Accessed 9 Jan. 2020.
- 3 Grant, M (1994) *My First Eighty Years* Henley-on-Thames Aidan Ellis.



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